A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

UNITY

OF THE

CATHOLICK CHURCH

Maintained in the

Church of *ENGLAND.*

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THE

THE UNITY OF THE CATHOLICK CHURCH

Maintained in the Church of *ENGLAND.*

WHosoever with an impartial eye, and a truly religious concern for the Honour of God, the Credit of the Gospel, and the Salvation of men, looks into the estate of Christendom; he will scarce find any greater cause of sorrowful Reflections than from the many Divisions, and Animosities, which have distracted, and separated its parts.

These have opened the mouths, and whet the tongues of professt enemies to reviling Invectives and profane Scoffs against our Blessed Lord himself, and his holy Religion, and stifled the first thoughts of admitting the most convincing Truths to a debate among Jews, Turks, or Pagans, and stopt their ears against the wisest Charms.

To no one cause can we more reasonably impute the small progress which Christianity hath made in the World for a thousand years past. The same contests have as pernicious influence at home upon the

Faith or manners of thoſe within the Pale of the Church.

Men are hereby too ſoon tempted into ſome degrees of Scepticiſm about very material Points of Chriſtian Doctrine, in which they obſerve ſo many to differ among themſelves. Others are the more eaſily ſeduced to ſeek and make much of all Arguments, whereby to baſle or weaken the cleareſt evidences for their conviction: and they ſeldom continue long in the ſame perſuaſion with thoſe, with whom they will not maintain the ſame Communion. Thus Schiſms have generally ended in Hereſies.

As miſchievous are the effects of theſe Diſtractions upon the manners of Chriſtians. There are many vitious, and diſorderly paſſions; ſuch as Anger, Wrath, Hatred, Revenge, Pride, Cenſoriouſneſs, *&c.* which take Sanctuary therein, and under that ſhelter put in their claim for the height of Chriſtian Graces, and the moſt holy zeal for God and his Cauſe. Every where they break, or looſen the Diſcipline of the Church, which ſhould guard its children from doing amiſs, or reſtore them after it, when the laſt and moſt capital puniſhment of being thruſt out of its Communion is like to be little dreaded, where many voluntarily deſert it with the higheſt pretences of better advantage elſewhere.

Now though this matter of fact, confirmed by woful experience, be a ſubject too ſad for a long meditation, or paſſionate enlargement, yet is it no more than what might have been foreſeen, without a Spirit of Propheſie, to follow from the corrupt nature, and depraved eſtate of mankind not otherwiſe rectified. Wherefore we muſt ſuppoſe that our ever bleſſed Saviour, in the Foundations of his holy Inſtitution, made all needful proviſion to prevent theſe fatal miſcariages.

By

By the ſufficient Revelation of all Fundamental Articles of Belief. By the as full Declaration of all the neceſſary precepts of good life. By inculcating frequently, and preſſing moſt emphatically thoſe commands concerning Love, Peace, Unity, Good Order, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, *&c.* directly oppoſed to thoſe contentions, in every Page of the New Teſtament: Theſe it may ſuffice but to name.

It will ſoon be granted, after the beſt proviſion of Rules, and moſt convincing Arguments and Motives to ſtrengthen them, that there will be need of ſome Government to encourage all in their performance, to reſtrain ſome from offering violence to them, and to provide for many emergencies.

Our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter, therefore, for the better ſecurity of his Truth, and the ſafer conduct of thoſe which adhere to it, eſtabliſh'd a Society or Church in the World, which he purchaſed with the moſt ineſtimable price, dignified with the higheſt Priviledges, encouraged with the largeſt Promiſes, back'd with the moſt ample Authority, and will always defend with the ſtrongeſt Guard, againſt all Power, or Policy on Earth or under the Earth; ſo that, as he hath told us, *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*

But now where this Church is to be found, and what are the meaſures of our Obligation to it, hath been a long and great debate, eſpecially between *us* and the *Romaniſts*. In moſt of their late Controverſial Books they have ſeemed ready to wave diſputes about particular points, in hopes of greater advantage, which they promiſe themſelves from this venerable name, and that bold, though moſt falſe and preſumptuous claim which they lay to the thing it ſelf, even excluſive to all others; which will appear from the true, but ſhort and plain ſtate of the caſe between us, the chief deſign of this attempt.

Now that we may not charge them, nor they us falſly or raſhly;

I. It may be convenient *firſt*, to lay down ſome Principles concerning this Church in which they and we ſeem moſtly agreed, though all our Writers expreſs not themſelves alike clearly herein.

II. To propound the chief Bands of Unity within this Church.

III. To mark out the moſt obvious Defections from them by the Romaniſts.

IV. To ſhew the Reformation in the Church of *England* proceeded, and was framed with all due regard to the preſervation of them.

V. To clear it of the moſt common Objections.

VI. To conſider the ſtrong obligations from hence upon all ſorts of Diſſenters among us to embrace, and continue in its Communion.

I. The former will ſoon be diſpatcht, which I reduce to the following particulars.

1. That our Bleſſed Saviour always had, and always will have a Church in the World, in which his Doctrine hath been, and ſhall be ſo far profeſt, and his Sacraments ſo effectually adminiſtred, that they who rightly improve them may not want neceſſary ſupplies for their preſent ſpiritual life, or future hopes of Salvation: though the extent of the Church as to its boundaries, and the perfection of it in degrees may be vaſtly different at one time, and in one place from another. This many *Propheſies* in the Old Teſtament, and *Promiſes* from our Saviour in the New give abundant ground for our Faith to rely upon, and the experience of all Ages hitherto hath confirmed.

2. That this Church is a diſtinct Society within it ſelf, furniſhed with ſufficient Authority in ſome to Govern, and Obligation in others to be Subject, neceſſary to every Society; which the power of the Keys given by

by our Lord to receive in, or ſhut out, and the exerciſe of Diſcipline from Divine Precept, and Scripture Examples evince beyond all exception. But then this Eccleſiaſtical Power, in whomſoever placed, or ſtrained to what height ſoever, can never extend to vacate, or change the expreſs Inſtitutions of Chriſt, or take away our Obligation to his revealed Truth, and direct Commands. In caſe of any competition the Apoſtles defence may be ours, *We muſt obey God rather than men.* And St. *Pauls* profeſſion, *We can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth.* And again, *If we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Goſpel,* &c. *let him be accurſed,* Gal. 1. 8,

3. This Church muſt be viſible, as every Society is more or leſs, whoſe parts are ſo, and whoſe Profeſſion muſt be ſo. Our entrance into it is in a viſible manner by Baptiſmal Initiation. Our obliged Communion with it is in diverſe outward ſenſible Acts, which the repreſentation of it by a Body or Building might prove. More clearly it is likened to a *City on a Hill, which cannot be hid,* Mat. 5. 14. Set up as the *Light of the world,* an Enſign to the Gentiles, which all Nations ſhould flee unto, or elſe it would witneſs againſt them; wherein its Followers ſhould take Sanctuary, and find a Refuge.

4. Within theſe Boundaries we have the only hopes of ſafety here and happineſs hereafter. What God may do by his ſupereminent unaccountable power in an extraordinary caſe is preſumption for us but to inquire into. Out of this Ark there is no proſpect given to us of any eſcape from the Univerſal Deluge. (*a*) All the ſpiritual Promiſes concerning this life or a better are made to this Church, the Members of his Body who is the Head.

(*a*) S. *Cyprian* Ep. 60. p. 143. Ed. Ox. *Si aliquis ex talibus fuerit apprehenſus, non eſt quod ſibi quaſi in confeſſione Nominis blandiatur, cùm conſtet ſi occiſi ejuſmodi extra Eccleſiam fuerint, Fidei coronam non eſſe, ſed pœnam potiùs eſſe perfidiæ.*

Head. Therefore the Apoſtles preach to Jews and Gentiles the neceſſity of receiving this Character. *Seeing there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved,* as St. *Peter* atteſts, *Acts* 4. 12.

Nec in Domo Dei inter unanimes habitaturos eſſe, quos videmus de pacificâ & Divinâ Domo furore diſcordiæ receſſiſſe. S. Auguſt. *& Cæteri in Conc. Cirtenſi adv. Donatiſtas. Ep.* 152. *T.* 2. *p.*696. *Edit. Frob.* 556. *Quiſquis ergo ab hâc Eccleſiâ Catholicâ fuerit ſeparatus, quantumlibet laudabiliter ſe vivere exiſtimet, hoc ſolo ſcelere quod à Chriſti unitate diſjunctus eſt, non habebit vitam. Sed ira Dei manet ſuper eum. Quiſquis autem in hâc Eccleſiâ bene vixerit, nihil ei præjudicant aliena peccata.* *Idem Ep.* 204. *ad Donatum Preſbyterum Donatiſt. T.* 2. *p.*834. *Foris autem ab Eccleſiâ conſtitutus, & ſeparatus à compage unitatis, & vinculo Charitatis, æterno ſupplicio puniveris, etiamſi pro Chriſti nomine vivus incenderis.*

5. This Church is but one. It is an Article of our Faith, expreſt in our Creed to believe it ſo. For *there be many members, yet but one body. One Spirit* quickning all; *One Lord,* and Head over all; *One God* and Father of all; *one Faith; one Baptiſm; one Hope* of our Calling in all, as the Apoſtle argues, *Eph.* 4.4,5,6,7, *&c.*

II. Now we are to enquire what are the chief Bands of Unity in the Church which make, keep, and evidence it to be one; How we may ſecure our ſelves within this Garden encloſed, this Spring ſhut up, this Fountain ſealed, as the Ancients uſually apply that *Cant.* 4. 12, to this one Encloſure of the Church.

1. This appears in the *Unity of Belief,* not only inwardly, but in the outward profeſſion of the ſame Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, and hath been generally preſerved, and continued down throughout all Ages of the Church. In teſtimony whereof the moſt eminent Biſhops upon their firſt Conſecration ſent to their Brethren Confeſſions of their Faith.

2. In

2. In the *Unity of* (a) *Charity*, and Affection as Fellow members one of another as well as of the ſame Head; that *if one ſuffer, all the reſt ſuffer with it*, and *if one rejoyce, all rejoyce with it*. Having an intimate Fellow-feeling of all the Good, or Evil, which befals any joyn'd in ſo near a Relation, beyond the compaſſion of ordinary Humanity; whereby we are bound not only to pray for, but by all offices of kindneſs, and moſt intimate Affection eſpecially to aſſiſt, and relieve each other in the ſame Houſhold of Faith. So that by our Perſonal Conſecration all our Labours, and Eſtates are in ſome meaſure devoted to the Honour of God, the Service of his Church, and the Neceſſities of any of its Members.

(a) *Tertullian de præſcript. Hæret. c. 20. p. 209. Sic omnes primæ, & Apoſtolicæ dum unâ omnes probant unitatem. Dum eſt communicatio Pacis, & appellatio Fraternitatis, conteſſeratio Hoſpitalitatis, quæ jura non alia ratio regit, quàm ejuſdem Sacramenti una traditio.*

S. *Auguſt. adv. literas Petiliani*, T. 7. p. 132. *Charitas Chriſtiana niſi in unitate Eccleſiæ non poteſt cuſtodiri.* & Ibid. p. 473. de bapt. adv. Donatiſt. l. 6. *Etiamſi Chriſti Baptiſmum uſque ad Sacramenti celebrationem perceperunt, tamen vitam æternam niſi per Charitatis unitatem non conſequuntur.* Et Ibid. de unitate Eccleſiæ, c. 2. p. 510. *Eccleſia Corpus Chriſti eſt, unde utique manifeſtum eſt eum, qui non eſt in membris Chriſti, Chriſtianam ſalutem habere non poſſe, membra autem Chriſti per Unitatis Charitatem ſibi copulantur, & per eandem Capiti ſuo cohærent, quod eſt Chriſtus.*

3. In the *Unity of Worſhip*, whereby we are obliged not only to offer up the ſame Worſhip for ſubſtance, but alſo in the outward Act to joyn, and communicate with each other therein, to preſent the ſame Prayers, and Praiſes, to celebrate together the ſame Sacraments, to hear the ſame Inſtructions, to frequent the ſame Religious Aſſemblies, as much as poſſible; that we may *with one mind, and with one mouth glorifie God even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. 15. 6. For as the Command of God, the Honour of his Religion, the Edification of his Church, the Propagation of his Truth, and the peculiar Promiſe of his Preſence, and Bleſſing require a ſolemn publick exerciſe of all Religious Worſhip in united Congregations; ſo hereby we moſt

moſt ſenſibly prove, and ſecure our unity therein. (*b*) Whoever then needleſly ſeparates himſelf from this Church, or refuſes to joyn in Communion with its Members, ſo far as it is in his power, where he may, without violence to any Doctrine or Precept of Chriſt, ſuch a one divides himſelf from his Body, and ſo from all the Promiſes that we know of the Sacred and comfortable Influences of that one Head and one Spirit.

(b) S. *Auſtin.* adv. literas Petiliani, T. 7. p. 124. *Huic Eccleſiæ, quæ per totam terram diffunditur, quiſquis non communicat, vides cui non communicat.*

Idem Ep. 50. ad Bonifacium. T. 2. p. 230. *Eccleſia Catholica ſola eſt Corpus Chriſti, cujus ille caput eſt Salvator Corporis ſui. Extra hoc Corpus neminem vivificat Spiritus Sanctus, quia ſicut ipſe dicit Apoſtolus Charitas Dei diffuſa eſt in cordibus noſtris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus eſt nobis, non eſt autem particeps Divinæ charitatis qui hoſtis eſt Unitatis.* Et de Bapt. adv. Donatiſt. l. 3. c. 16. T. 7. p. 409. *Ipſa eſt enim Charitas quam non habent, qui ab Eccleſiæ Catholicæ Communione præciſi ſunt, &c. Non habet Dei charitatem, qui non diligit Eccleſiæ unitatem.*

S. *Cyprian.* de Unitate Eccleſiæ, p. 113. *Inexpiabilis, & gravis culpa diſcordiæ nec paſſione purgatur. Eſſe Martyr non poteſt qui in Eccleſia non eſt: ad regnum pervenire non poteſt, qui eam quæ regnatura eſt, derelinquit.*

4. In the *Unity of Diſcipline*, (*a*) whereby every Act of any particular Church conformable to the Inſtitutions of our Saviour, and the univerſally received practice of his Church ſtands confirmed as an Act of the whole Church. Particularly whoever is admitted into it accordingly by Baptiſm in one place is to be accounted a member of the Church Catholick, and received into its Communion wherever he comes, if no evidence appear of his excluſion by any after regular Cenſure. Likewiſe into whatever Office, or Miniſtration any are orderly admitted in one part thereof, in the ſame are they to be acknowledged in all others, though without that particular Juriſdiction which they had in their own. But whoever

(a) *Tertullian.* Apolog. c. 39. *Corpus ſumus de conſcientiâ religionis & diſciplinæ unitate & ſpei fœdere.* Clerus ad Don. Cyprian. Ep. 30. Ox. Ed. p. 56. *Idem enim omnes credimur operati, in quo deprehendimur eâdem omnes cenſuræ, & diſciplinæ conſenſione ſociati.*

Ità etiam argumentatur idem Clerus Rom. adv. Marcionem excommunicatum à Patre ſuo, & ab iis non receptum, in S. Epiphanio. Hær. 42. l. 1. T. 2. p. 303. Par. Edit. Ἂν δύναμθα ἄνευ τ ἐπιτροπῆς τῦ πατρός σε τῦτο ποιῆσαι, μία γὰρ ἔζιν ἡ πίςις, καὶ μία ἡ ὁμόνοια, &c.

Syneſius Epiſt. 58. p. 203. *de cenſurâ in Andronicum, Thoantem & eorum conſortes,* εἰδὲ τὶς ὡς μιαρὸς ἀπορρίπτοι τὴν ἀποκυβαλίσει τ ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ δίξεται τὺς ἀποκηρύκτυς αὐτῆς, ἴσω χρὴ τ ἐκκλησίαν ἣν μίαν ὁ χριςὸς εἶναι βέλεται.

whoſoever lies under any Cenſure in one Church, he is to be ſuppoſed under the ſame in all others, and not to be received into Communion till the Sentence be reverſed by the ſame Power, or a ſtill higher, and greater Authority; according to the *Fifth Canon of the Council of Nice*, and the deſign of their *form'd*, and *communicatory Letters*, without which none were to paſs from one Church to another. Thus every Church is accountable to its Neighbour Churches, and ſo to the whole Church for its Actions, that one may not do, what the other undoes, without any regard to this Unity, which would lead to the confuſion and diſtraction of all. Wherefore to put an end to ſuch differences when riſen, or obviate any growing miſchief thereby, and to receive Appeals from perſons who think themſelves aggrieved, or injured by their own Biſhop or Church, a *Council* of all Biſhops in each Province is appointed twice in the year by the ſame *Canon*, and in many others. But there was no mention then of any farther, or higher Appeal. (*b*) Thus an amicable correſpondence, and intimate communication was maintained between the Neighbour Churches, and their Governours, and by them with others removed at a greater diſtance throughout the world.

(*b*) *S.* Cyprian. *ad Antonianum*, p. 112. Ox. Ed. *Cum ſit à Chriſto una Eccleſia per totum mundum in multa membra diviſa, item Epiſcopatus unus Epiſcoporum multorum concordi numeroſitate diffuſus.* Et Ep. 3. p. 71. *Omnes enim nos decet pro Corpore totius Eccleſiæ, cujus per varias quaſque provincias membra digeſta ſunt excubare.*

S. Auguſt. *de unitate Eccleſiæ*, c. 12. T. 7. p. 534. *Neque enim quia & in orbe terrarum plerumque Regna dividuntur, ideo Chriſtiana unitas dividitur, cum in utraque parte Catholica inveniatur Eccleſia.*

These need no long proof, but may be taken as generally granted; the main diſpute will lie in the particular application of the two laſt.

Now to prevent as much as may be all difficulties about them, it may be added to the third of *Unity of Worſhip*, that it will be very convenient, if not abſolutely neceſſary in any ſetled eſtabliſhed Church, that there be ſome ſet Forms of publick Miniſtrations, without which it is hard for any to know before hand what they joyn with, eſpecially for ſtrangers.

But then theſe Forms ſhould be as plain, and ſimple as poſſible, with as little pretence as can be of any danger to the known Will, and Word of God. For no Obligation whatſoever can tie me to communicate with another in that which he forbids; and it will be a great temptation to more than ſuſpect this danger, when mens private opinions, or fanciful tranſports are mingled with them, which have little ſhew of Scripture, or the general practice of the Church in all Ages to juſtifie them.

The readieſt way I know of to prevent that hazard, after all other care about the matters contained, is to endeavour that theſe Offices be as near alike in all places as can well be, yet every difference in Judgment, when no violence is offered to the Foundation of Catholick Faith and Unity, muſt not break this Communion, according to that profeſſion of St. *Cyprian* (*a*) Judging no man, nor excluding him from the right of Communion if he think otherwiſe; where the diſpute was thought of no mean concern, eſpecially in this cauſe. Which (*b*) St. *Auguſtin* oft alledges againſt the *Donatiſts*, that boaſted ſo much of St. *Cyprians* judgment againſt his declared practice. To the ſame purpoſe may be applied the treatment of (*c*) St. *Polycarp* in *Rome* by *Anicetus* the Biſhop, though they differed about the time of the celebration of *Eaſter*, and in other points, which could not be agreed between them; yet this laſt not only invited the former to Communion with him,

but

a P. 229. Ox. Ed. *in Concil. Carthaginenſi de baptizandis Hæreticis. Neminem judicantes aut à jure communionis, ſi diverſum ſenſerit amoventes.*

b De Bapt. adv. Donat. l. 2. T. 7. p. 391. *& ſæpe ibid.*

c Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 26.

but alſo to celebrate the ſacred Euchariſt in his Church, as the words are generally interpreted; which St. *Irenæus* not long after urges ſtrongly againſt *Victor*, who was haſtening to excommunicate the *Aſian Churches* for the ſame difference, contrary to his Predeceſſors practice.

As to the Fourth of *Unity of Diſcipline*, if Unity of Government in all parts be not indiſpenſably neceſſary to it, yet it will be ſo far, as not to abrogate, or invade the poſitive Inſtitutions of our Saviour himſelf herein, and be more than convenient, that it be as conformable, as it is in our power to make it in one place, to what it is in another. It ſeems horribly preſumptuous, violently to thruſt out of the Church that Government under the influence of which Chriſtianity hath been conveyed, and preſerved from the Age of the Apoſtles in the moſt diſtant places, upon pretence of erecting a new better Scheme or model of our own, or becauſe of the intricate uſe of one or two terms in Scripture, when the Church was in its firſt formation, though againſt the plain current of it in other places, and the uninterrupted tradition of the whole Church. A Church indeed muſt be more or leſs perfect according to its Government, for ſuitable will be the Exercife and Authority of its Diſcipline. What allowance may be made for thoſe, who deſire to come as near as they can to the Primitive Pattern, though it be not in their power to reach it in many conſiderable points, I am not now to diſpute. But moſt inexcuſable, and highly obnoxious are they, that by extreme violence, and uſurpation endeavour to deſtroy what they found regularly eſtabliſhed to their hands.

III. But we are here moſt concerned with the bold claims of the *Romaniſts* amidſt their moſt obvious Defections, who have made it the principal Band of Unity

in the Catholick Church to be subject to the See of *Rome*, and the pretended Vicar of Christ therein, as the Universal Head, and Monarch of the Church: this they have determined as *de fide*, and put into their very Creed, and excluded all that do not expresly own it.

But against this as a great breach of Christian Unity we have many just exceptions, and been always ready to prove them so (*a*.)

a Bishop *Carleton* of threefold jurisdiction. Dr. *Barrow's* Treatise of the Popes Supremacy.

1. In that no evidence from Scripture appears of any such Authority conferred upon him, or them: But many strong intimations of the contrary. The places usually alledged to make good their Claim are so far fetcht, and so little to their purpose, that they contain alone a strong presumption against them, and their own Authors sometimes speak of them with great distrust. Here if any where sure we may safely argue without daring to prescribe Rules to the most High, that in a matter of so great moment, had it been designed, it would have been most explicitly delivered, and solemnly inculcated.

2. But that it was not, we have farther evidence from the silence of the most Ancient, and best Fathers of the Church herein, when they have occasion to explain the places insisted on: (*b*) nay expresly expounding them to a quite different Sense, and disowning any such Authority of one Church, or Bishop over others. And when the Roman Bishop began any thing tending towards this, and grounded his claim upon a falsly alledged Canon of the *Council of Nice*, not on any Divine Charter, after examination, and proof of the

b *S.* Cyprian. *de unitate Ecclesiæ post loca communiter allegata.* p. 107. *quamvis Apostolis omnibus parem potestatem tribuat, &c. paulo post. Hoc erant utique cæteri Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus pari consortio præditi honoris & potestatis.*

Idem & alii in Concil. Carthaginensi. p. 229. *Neque enim quisquam nostrum Episcopum se Episcoporum constituit, aut Tyranico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adigit.*

S. *Hieron. in Epist. ad Euagrium* T 2. p. 329. *Si authoritas quæritur, orbi major est urbe. Ubicunque fuerit Episcopus sive Romæ, sive Eugubii, sive Constantinopoli,*

the Forgery, other Biſhops wholly diſclaim it, and declare againſt it, it, and warn him for the future not to diſturb their Regular proceedings by ſuch unwarrantable practices. (*c*) As the *African Biſhops*, and the great St. *Auſtin* among them in the caſe of Appeals. It will be hard for them to find any thing like an Argument, or Example of it within the firſt five Ceturies, at leaſt which was not diſowned, and condemned by the reſt of the Church, unleſs from ſuch forged Writings, which they themſelves will ſcarce now defend.

ſive Rhegii, ſive Alexandriæ, ſive Tanis, ejuſdem meriti, ejuſdem eſt & Sacerdotii. Potentia divitiarum, & paupertatis humilitas vel ſublimiorem, vel inferiorem Epiſcopum non facit. Cæterum omnes Apoſtolorum ſucceſſores ſunt.

c *Vide Epiſt. Concilii Africani ad Bonifacium*, T. 2. p. 1670, 1674. Concil. ult. Ed.

3. In the following Ages we have as good Teſtimony from Hiſtory as almoſt in any other matter of fact, by what ſteps, and in what manner this ſtill growing power of the Church and Biſhop of *Rome* advanc'd it ſelf to the height which it now claims. (*d*)

1. By Uſurpation upon the Rights of other Churches, every degree of exaltation gained being the depreſſion and diminution of them, till all power was in a manner ſwallowed up by the Papal ambition, and none left to any other, which was not dependant hereupon in its original, and altogether precarious in its adminiſtration. So that here alone it muſt be immediately derived from Chriſt, but to all others by Commiſſion from him. Thus in the choice of the chief Governours of the Church all muſt await his conſent, and confirmation, where he does not alone forcibly obtrude them, and muſt pay for it a round ſum for an acknowledgment at their entrance, and an after tributary Penſion out of their income, and take a formal Oath of ſubjection at their admittance, and own their own Authority from his delegation, and be liable to have their Sentences reverſed at his pleaſure, and flee as far as his Judicatory, and

d See D. *Caves* diſſertation of ancient Church Government, and Dr. *Parker* of the Government of the Church for the firſt 600 years.

and ſtand to the trial of it, when he is pleaſed to call any cauſe to himſelf. Nay, if a Controverſie ariſe between him and any Prince, or State, the whole Kingdom or Nation ſhall lie at once under his *Interdict*, the Clergy be with-held from the exerciſe of their Function, and the People from the benefit of Publick Divine Worſhip and Sacraments. Of theſe and ſuch like effects of the plenitude of Apoſtolick Power ſo much talkt of lately, they would do well to ſhew us any thing like a Plea from Scripture or Antiquity within the bounds forementioned, or for ſome Ages after in the greater part: certainly ſo great a change could not be effected without ſome notice and complaints, ſtruglings and contentions, of which Church Hiſtory is full.

Their early Faith ſpoken of throughout the world in St. *Pauls* time. The eminent Zeal of the firſt Biſhops of that Church, moſt of whom, if we may credit the account generally received of them, ſealed to the former with their bloud. Their continued conſtancy in the Orthodox Profeſſion thereof amidſt the corruptions or defections of ſo many others, particularly in the time of the *Arrian* Perſecution. The concurrent opinion of the Foundation of their Church being laid by the two chief Apoſtles St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*; and the honour of the Imperial Seat wherein they were placed, *&c.* gave them great repute, and advantagious recommendation in thoſe firſt Ages. None will much contend with them about priority of Order or Precedence. But when the preheminence of the firſt Biſhop came to be improved into a *Patriarchate*, and that ſwelled into the the Title of the Univerſal Biſhop, which (*a*) St. *Gregory* ſo ſeverely condemned in the

(*a*) S. *Greg.* lib. 4, Regiſt. Ep. 32. *Abſit à cordibus Chriſtianorum nomen iſtud blaſphemiæ in quod omnium Sacerdotum honor adimitur, dum ab uno ſibi dementèr arrogatur*, &c. *Et alibi in Epiſt. paſſim.*

Biſhop

Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, and that at laſt grew into the ſtile of the *ſole Vicar of Chriſt*, and Soveraign Monarch of the whole Church: when the interpoſition of a Friendly, and Brotherly Arbitration, which all perſons in diſtreſs, or under the apprehenſions of injury are apt to flee unto, and amplifie, made way by degrees for the challenge of an ordinary Juriſdiction, and that at firſt from the pretence of *Canonical priviledge* to that *Divine Right* and Sanction, and then to prevent all ſcruple about its determinations theſe muſt be back'd with the vindication of an infallible conduct: When inſtead of that charitable ſupport they at firſt readily beſtowed on other Churches in their diſtreſs, they now made uſe of this power to rob them of what was left, taking the advantage of the poverty, and oppreſſion of ſome under the Common Enemy, or the confuſion of others through Domeſtick diſtractions, to raiſe themſelves out of their ſpoils; then no wonder if other Churches complain, and ſtruggle under that yoke, which they could not preſently, or eaſily throw off.

Indeed, had not this claim of the Church and Biſhop of *Rome* riſen to ſuch an extravagant height in the arrogance of its pretended Title, and been ſtreined to that exceſs in the exerciſe of its aſſumed Authority; ſo as not to leave it in the power of other Churches to take all due and neceſſary care of their own members, or provide for them all needful ſupplies, theſe might more eaſily have born their uſurpation of more power than ever they could prove belonged to them. They that have learnt the Humility of Chriſts School, and who are more concern'd to perform their Duty than vindicate their Privilege, and know how much ſafer it is to obey than command, and eaſier to be Governed than to Govern, will not be much moved at what others fondly aſſume, knowing ſtill that the more

difficult

difficult account awaits them. But then this Power became moſt intolerable when it was made uſe of to purpoſes ſo much worſe than it ſelf, which were beſide the former;

2. The weakning of the power of Temporal Princes, and diſturbing the Civil Rights of men. (*a*) Although our bleſſed Saviour aſſured *Pilate his Kingdom was not of this world*, yet his pretended Vicar here on earth can hardly ſay ſo: for beſide the Temporal Dominions unto which he hath entitled himſelf a Sovereign Prince, there are few other Kingdoms, or States on this ſide of the world in which he hath not, or had not almoſt as great a ſhare of the Government, as their immediate Princes; at leaſt ſo far as to preſcribe bounds to their Adminiſtrations, and ſubject in great meaſure all Laws, and perſons to his Foreign Courts, Juriſdiction, and Decrees, yea, their Purſes to his Exactions; and upon the leaſt diſpute hath withdrawn ſo great a number of his immediate dependants, who ſcarce own any other Governours, and raiſed ſo many diſturbances, that great Princes and States have been forced at laſt to yield. Not to mention the Arrogance it at length grew up unto in dethroning Princes, giving their Kingdoms to others, authorizing their Subjects to rebel againſt them, or all ways to oppoſe them, and what oft follows, if not expreſſed, to murder them: as in their late Sentence againſt ſome of our Neighbour Princes.

a *Cracanthorp's defence of Conſtantine, and againſt the Popes temporal Monarchy.*

But before, much of this may be ſeen in the long contentions between ſome of the Weſtern Emperours, particularly *Henry the Third*, and *Fourth*, and the Popes, as we have them deſcribed in their own Authors (*b*.) Alſo to go no farther, their various Conteſts with ſeveral of our Kings, eſpecially *Henry the Second* and the almoſt continual complaints in all our Parlia-

b *Sigonius de regno Italiæ*, and all other Hiſtorians of that time.

Parliaments before the Reformation of the encroachments made by them upon the Civil Rights of Prince and Subject by vexatious and chargeable Suits and Appeals as far as *Rome*; by Inſolencies and divers Rapines committed under the ſhelter of their protection, and defended from due puniſhment, and by their extravagant Extortions, *&c.* abundantly prove.

Now though theſe Uſurpations grew by degrees, and were practiſed in a different manner according to the condition of thoſe they had to do with, or the temper of him that managed them; yet they muſt needs ſeem more or leſs grievous to all, when power ſufficient was not left to the greateſt Monarchs to defend themſelves, or protect their Subjects, preſerve the peace, or promote the welfare, and provide for the ſecurity of their own Countries. Then no marvel if ſome of them grow weary of ſo inſupportable oppreſſions, and at laſt take courage to grapple with, and extricate themſelves from ſuch manifeſt encroachments upon their own, and the Peoples Civil Rights, as well as the Eccleſiaſtical of the Church in their Dominions, and be forced to ſome harſh and almoſt violent methods, when the more gentle and benign could prevail nothing.

3. But beſide theſe more publick Invaſions upon Church and State, that which made the Uſurpation more odious and inſufferable was the farther abuſe of the ſame extravagant power to bring in ſtrange and dangerous Doctrines, corrupt, and unlawful practices into the Church, and impoſe them upon all in their Communion, exactly fitted to feed their Ambition, enrich their Coffers, ſecure their Authority, and promote their eaſe and Luxury. Such of the *firſt ſort* are their Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, and Purgatory, of Merit, and Supererogation, the multiplicity of Vows,

and deluſions in the Principles of Repentance, and miniſtration of Penance. Of the *latter ſort* are the Invocation of Saints and Angels, Adoration of Reliques and Images, their half Communion, the Scripture lockt up, and Divine Service performed in an unknown tongue, *&c.*

Theſe and divers like them have proved great Scandals abroad, and ſtumbling blocks at home, and whatever varniſh they may put upon them by the faireſt pretences, or however they may caſt a miſt before the eyes of their Diſciples by nice diſtinctions, yet they have ſo disfigured the face of Chriſtianity, that he who compares the late appearances of it in the world with the model of it laid down in Scripture, or the Records of the Primitive Church, can hardly believe it the ſame thing.

But the particulars are not here to be diſputed, they have ſufficiently been confuted. and expoſed by Proteſtant Writers, and were by ſeveral before excepted againſt, and diſclaimed, though ſome ſuffered ſeverely for ſo doing, and many more we may ſuppoſe waited an opportunity to free themſelves from their preſſure. That which I am now moſt to inſiſt upon is this, that if the charge we draw up againſt theſe of falſhood in judgment, groſs Superſtition or Idolatry in Worſhip, and immorality in manners, be true and impartial, as we have been ever ready to make good, and ſhall do againſt all the Artifices of the Defendants; Then no Authority whatever, however regularly founded, or unexceptionably conveyed, can oblige us to theſe, againſt the revealed Will, or Word of God, the Dictates of our Conſciences, as we hope carefully, and rightly informed; the ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, and the Belief and practice of the Church in the firſt and pureſt Ages.

Greater

Greater cauſe was there to endeavour by all lawful means to throw off ſuch an uſurped Power, that made ſo ill uſe of what it had unjuſtly gotten, and to reſtore Religion to its primitive beauty in Doctrine, Worſhip, and Precepts of Life.

But alas many difficulties lay in the way of its accompliſhment, and all poſſible ſtruglings, and contentions by force and policy were uſed by the adverſe Party to prevent its beginning, or obſtruct it Progreſs. Great was their Intereſt in every place; Strong was the influence they had upon perſons in Authority; Numerous were their Aſſiſtants and Dependants at home and abroad; Weighty was their concern which lay at ſtake, and many were the advantages which they had of any that oppoſed them: So that no wonder if a Reformation ſo long wiſht for, and much wanted were ſo ſlowly effected. It is rather more ſtrange that in ſo many places it did maſter theſe and ſuch like encumbrances, and in ſo ſhort a time made ſo conſiderable a progreſs. If in ſome places it proceeded with leſs Order, Uniformity, and Calmneſs than could have been wiſht for in a Religious Reformation, Neceſſity in part, with many perplexed difficulties and encumbrances, may in ſome meaſure excuſe what no Law before-hand fully warrants.

IV. But leaving others to anſwer for themſelves, in my next particular I am to conſider how regularly, and ſedately it proceeded in the Church of *Engiand* within the bounds of Catholick Unity.

1. With the concurrence, and encouragement all along of the Supreme Power to free it from any but ſuſpicion of Rebellion. So it began at firſt with the breaking of the Papal yoke of Supremacy, the Tranſlation of the Bible, and ſome like preparatives to Reformation under *Henry the Eighth*, and the united

Suffrages of his Parliaments, and the Bishops themselves therein. It proceeded suitably to a further emprovement in most particulars under his Son *Edward the Sixth*. And at last it came to its full settlement and establishment under *Queen Elizabeth*. The beginning and carrying on of the Reformation here was by such loyalty of Principles, and Practices that we challenge any Church in the World to a Comparison therein. Indeed this was so notorious, that her Roman Adversaries have turned her Glory into a Reproach by upbraiding her, though most invidiously, with the name of a *Parliamentary Religion*; because it received all along so much countenance and assistance from those great Assemblies of all the three Estates of the Kingdom under their Head and Sovereign.

2. But farther to clear her of all just imputation from hence, it must be added that the whole work was carried on with the advice, and mature deliberation of the Clergy assembled in Convocation, representing the intire body of them, and therein a National Council. That they from their Education, and presumed Knowledge, as well as from their Office, and Ecclesiastical Anthority are ordinarily fittest to judge, debate, and determine of Religious matters, will be soon granted: But that the Civil Power may, and ought sometimes to remind them of their Duty, and restrain them from gross Defections from it, may be proved by several Scripture Examples in the Old Testament, and the Supereminence of their place. But happy is that Order and Unity in which both Powers are joyned together for the service of God, the security of his Church, and promotion of his true Religion, as it was here: though it could not be expected but the first attempts would meet with several difficulties, fierce Debates, and Controversies, yet still the entire esta-

blishment

bliſhment was ratified by the regular determination of the Clergy ſo aſſembled as before, as well as was after confirmed by the Royal Aſſent.

3. Yet farther to juſtifie themſelves from any affected innovation in ſuch a change, all was done with the greateſt Reverence, Reſpect, and Deference to the Ancient Church to clear their continued Unity therewith.

1. In *Doctrine.* The ancient Creeds were taken for the foundation of its Confeſſion, the four firſt General Councils are received with great Veneration, and a particular (*a*) Injunction was laid upon its Miniſters to preſs upon none the neceſſary belief of any Doctrine, but what may be proved from Scripture, and the general current of the Expoſitions of the Fathers thereupon. So careful it hath been in all points to keep within the bounds of Catholick Principles, in thoſe firſt inſtilled into its young Diſciples in the Catechiſm, and in thoſe delivered in its Articles to be ſubſcribed by ſuch to whom it entruſts any Office, that the *poſitive part* of them will hardly be diſowned by our very Adverſaries, and can ſcarce appear otherwiſe to any, than the common Faith of all Chriſtians of Orthodox repute in all Ages. And for other determinations in the *Negative* ſhe only declares thereby how little concerned ſhe is to receive or own the falſe or corrupt additions to the firſt unalterable Rule. No Church hath profeſſed and evidenced a more awful and tender regard to Antiquity next to the expreſs Word of God. Both which ſhe oft appeals to, deſires to be ruled by; and where their footſteps are not ſufficiently clear, chooſes not to impoſe upon her own Children, nor cenſure her Neigh-

(*a*) *In libro Canonum in Synodo Londinenſi,* an. 1571. *titulo de Concionatoribus. Imprimis videbunt ne quid unquam doceant pro concione, quod à populo religioſè teneri, & credi velint, niſi quod conſentaneum ſit doctrinæ Veteris & Novi teſtamenti, quodque ex illa ipſâ doctrina Catholici Patres, & veteres Epiſcopi collegerint.*

Neighbours; keeps within the moſt ſafe, and modeſt boundaries; is not forward in determining nice and intricate diſputes, which have perplexed and confounded many in their haſty and bold Poſitions, particularly about the Divine Decrees, and ſuch like ſublime Points, In which few underſtand where the main ſtreſs of the Controverſie lies; It may be none can comprehend the depth of the matters upon which the Deciſion ought to be grounded. But alas how many have been forward to lay down, and fiercely contend for, on each ſide, their private opinions herein as the firſt Rudiments of Theology, to be placed in their very Creeds or Catechiſms, and ſo a foundation muſt be laid for endleſs Conteſts and Diviſions? But moſt cautious hath our Church been in not laying ſuch occaſions to fall in the way of any: So that both ſorts of Adverſaries have made their complaints againſt her for not being more poſitive, and particularly in ſuch Declarations, though none can charge her juſtly with defect in any point of Faith ſo own'd in the beſt Ages of the Church.

2. As clear, and unexceptionable hath been her proceeding in *Church Government*, preſerving that form, which from all Teſtimonies of Antiquity hath continued in the Church from the very Apoſtles, under the conduct, and happy Influence of which Chriſtianity hath been propagated, and continued throughout the world, whatever different meaſures ſome other Reformed Churches have taken, whether forced by neceſſity, or ſwayed by particular inclination, or prejudice. The Church of *England* kept up the univerſally received diſtinct prime Orders of *Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and *Deacons*: not deſiring to cenſure others, who can beſt anſwer for themſelves, but endeavouring to confine her ſelf to what was moſt Canonical, and Regular, and

and to ſhew how little affected ſhe was to alteration from any eſtabliſhment, except in notorious corruptions and abuſes: And how neceſſary ſhe thought due Order and Subordination in the Church to prevent Schiſms and Hereſies, and to give the greater Authority and advantage to her Miniſtrations; and finally to free her ſelf from all ſuſpicion of irregularity in her Succeſſion, derived down from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which ſhe, as much as any Church in the World, may pretend unto. And though ſome intermediate Ages have been blemiſhed with much degeneracy, yet ſhe was concerned only to ſeparate this, but retain, and convey down to others whatſoever good and wholſom proviſion ſhe received from thoſe before.

Farther, to evince this, particular care was taken by expreſs Law (*a*) to confirm the Rules of Government, or *Canon Law* before received in the Church till ſome better proviſion could be made ſo far as it contradicts not the Law of the Land, or the Word of God; making as few changes in the outward face of the Church as was poſſible, and ſenſibly proving it her deſign properly not to deſtroy, but build, nor yet therein to erect a new, but reform an old Church.

* See the Statute 25 of *Henry the Eighth*, cap. 19. Sect. 7. expreſly revived 1 *Eliz.* c. 1. ſect. 6.

3. Alike Canonical, and orderly hath been her Conſtitution in matters of *Worſhip*. Her Forms of Prayer and Praiſe with the whole order of her Liturgy are compoſed with the greateſt temper, and expreſſed in the moſt plain and comprehenſive terms to help forward uniform Devotion, pious Affection, the moſt Orthodox Profeſſion, and Catholick Communion. So that I think it may be univerſally affirmed, that there is not any thing required in her publick Service neceſſary to thoſe who communicate with her, which any that own the name of Chriſtians, or are own'd for ſuch by the general body of them, can almoſt ſcruple; unleſs becauſe

becauſe it is a *Form*, by one ſort, and becauſe it is *ours* by another ſort. But how unreaſonable herein are both? So careful ſhe hath been to lay the ground of moſt Catholick Unity, and to remove whatever might obſtruct it.

This our Adverſaries the Romaniſts confirmed by their own practice, when for ſeveral years, as we have been told (*a*) in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, they frequented our Churches, joyn'd in our Prayers and Praiſes, attended on our Sermons and other Inſtructions, and received (as ſome add) our Sacraments, according to the order for ſubſtance the ſame as now, and had it is like done ſo ſtill, having nothing to object againſt them but from the after-prohibition of the *Pope*, who had reaſon to fear they who were ſo well provided of all needful ſupply, and defence at home might thus by degrees be withdrawn from ſubjection to his Authority abroad; that darling point never to be diſpenſed, or parted with, whatever elſe might have been yielded (*b*.)

a *Camdeni Eliz.* an. 1570.

b *Camdeni Eliz.* an. 1560.

Our Reformers who compoſed our *Liturgy* carefully collected the remainders of true Primitive Devotion then in uſe, and ſeparated from them all thoſe corrupt additions, which ignorance, ſuperſtition, and crafty policy had mixed therewith. Therefore it is ſo far from being an objection, that any part of our Liturgy was tranſlated from the Roman Offices, that while nothing is retained contrary to wholſom Doctrine, and ſound Piety, it is a convincing argument of her impartial Sincerity, and deſire to preſerve Uniformity, as much as poſſible, with all Chriſtians abroad, as well as at home in her own Members: ſecuring all the Subſtantials of Worſhip according to the plain ſenſe of Scripture, and the pattern of the Primitive Church.

And

And as to *Circumſtantials* and *Ceremonies*, ſhe is ſenſible when they are too numerous how apt they are to darken the inward, and more eſſential luſter of Religion, and prove a Burden inſtead of a Relief to its Worſhip, which ſhe takes notice (*c*) St. *Auguſtin* complain'd of in his time: But have ſince ſo encreaſed in the Eaſtern, as well as Weſtern Churches, that it muſt argue a great aw to make the Service look like any thing ſerious and Sacred. However this number alone, where the particulars are not otherwiſe obnoxious, tempts ſome to ſpend all their zeal therein, and diverts them from things more neceſſary, or gives too much occaſion to others to quarrel about them. Yet withal being apprehenſive how needful it would be to maintain Order, and Decency, She hath kept ſome, though very few, and thoſe moſt plain, and unexceptionable in their nature, moſt ſignificative of the end for which they were appointed, and moſt ancient, and univerſal in their Inſtitution, and practice, hinted in the title of our Liturgy as it is changed from the former. And to prevent all differences hereabout, ſhe hath expreſſed her ſenſe of them ſo clearly, and explicitely, that one would think no peeviſh obſtinacy had room to interpoſe a ſcruple however the event hath proved.

(*c*) Preface to the Common Prayer concerning Ceremonies why ſome are abolished.

Thus abundantly hath the Church of *England* vindicated her Reformation from all pretence of Apoſtacy from the True, Ancient, Catholick, and Apoſtolick Church, and ſhewed in all inſtances how careful ſhe hath been *to preſerve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* with all the Members thereof. Nor hath ſhe been wanting in any reſpect or reverence due thereunto. No Church being more cautious, and ſparing in its determinations, more Canonical in its Impoſitions, more Regular in its Succeſſion, and more charitable in its Cenſures: making all neceſſary proviſion for

her own Children ſo within the bounds of Catholick Unity, that had other Churches obſerved the like method, or meaſures, way had been made for an univerſal conſent; (*a*) and every true Chriſtian where ever he came would have found his own Church wherewith to communicate without heſitancy in all Religious Offices. And as (*b*) St. *Auguſtin* obſerved in his time, he would have needed but to enquire for the Catholick Church, and no Schiſmatick would have dared to divert him to their Conventicles.

a Τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ποτε τῆς ἐκκλησίας τὸ καύχημα ὅτι οὐδὲ τῶν περάτων τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐπὶ τὰ πέρατα μικροῖς συμβολαίοις ἐφοδιαζόμενοι οἱ ἐξ ἑκάστης ἐκκλησίας ἀδελφοὶ πάντας πατέρας, καὶ ἀδελφοὺς εὕρισκον. S. *Baſil.* Ep. 193. T. 3. p. 409.

b St. *Auguſt.* adv. Epiſt. Manich. T. 6. p. 118. A.

But if after the confuſions, and diſorders of ſo many Centuries amidſt ſuch a depraved ſtate by corrupt manners, diverſities of opinion, and perplext Intereſts, ſo great a happineſs be not to be hoped for now: that private perſon, or particular Church will clear themſelves before God, and all good men, that do what is in their power towards it, and pray to Him to amend what they cannot change, and in the mean time make the beſt uſe of what means they enjoy.

Upon which Premiſes an eaſie Solution is given to the old cavilling queſtion, Where was your Church before the Reformation, or that time?

We anſwer, Juſt where it is: Thereby no new Church was ſet up; no new Articles of Faith brought in; no new Sacraments; no new order of Prieſthood to miniſter in holy things: all which would have indeed required new Miracles, and a new immediate Authority from Heaven ſo atteſted: only the old were purged from impurities in Doctrine, Worſhip, and Practice, which, in paſſing through ſo many degenerate Ages, they had contracted, and that an ordinary Power might ſuffice

to

to do. If we were in the Catholick Church before, we are ſo ſtill, and hope, to better purpoſe. We are not therefore out of it, becauſe their raſh Cenſures have excluded us and then they unreaſonably take advantage to argue againſt us from their own act: We never formally ſhut them out what ever they have done to us.

What degrees of corruption in Faith or Manners may be conſiſtent with the bare being of a Church, or the poſſibility of ſalvation therein, is needleſs and dangerous for us nicely to enquire: it may be impoſſible for us to know. I am ſure it is moſt ſafe for us to reform what we know to be amiſs, and to leave thoſe who do not, to ſtand or fall by their own Maſter. It is a very ill requital of our Charity if it be turned into a weapon of offence to wound, or ſlay us, by that by which we ſhewed our deſire of their Cure. But they and we muſt ſtand another trial, and await a final infallible Sentence, which ours here cannot change. The beſt ſecurity that we know to meet it with comfort will be to uſe the moſt ſtrict impartiality with our ſelves, and the greateſt Charity to others.

Yet our Adverſaries glory in nothing more than in the name of the *Catholick Church*, and boaſt in no Title ſo much as that of *Catholicks*, which hath had deſervedly ſo great veneration in all Antiquity.

But their claim here truly examined will prove as fallacious and arrogant as in any other inſtance. For the term *Catholick* if we reſpect the notation of the word, or the moſt conſtant uſe of it, is the ſame as *Univerſal*, and ſo joyned to the Church ſignifies the general Body of all Chriſtians diſperſed thoughout the World, oppoſed to any diſtinct Party, or ſeparate Communion.

Thus we find it conſtantly applied by St. *Auguſtin* in all his Tracts againſt the *Donatiſts*, and ſo oppoſed to them who went about to ſhut it up within their own Party, and ſtreitned Communion; therein too cloſely imitated by our Adverſaries, who, in ſpite of name or thing, make the ſame incloſures about the Catholick as about the Roman Church, and are as free in their ſevereſt cenſures of all others, and as haughty in what they aſſume to themſelves alone as they were, though not proceeding upon the ſame grounds. But what that holy Father every where preſſeth upon them reacheth as nearly our Antagoniſts; the indiſpenſable neceſſity of Charity, that great bond of Unity in the Church, and principal evidence of the Divine Spirit, which animates the whole, without which the higheſt gifts, and moſt Sacred Miniſtrations are rendred ineffectual. This is one of the prime Characteriſtick notes of the true Catholick Church, and every living Member thereof, and nothing is more oppoſite to their Principles aud Practices, who have formally excluded all other Chriſtians and Churches from any ſhare therein, not only thoſe in the Weſt, that have deſervedly caſt off that power, which they had unjuſtly arrogated, and tyrannically exerciſed, but alſo the *Greeks*, and others in the Eaſt, that never owned any ſubjection to them.

But moſt ſecurely may the *Church of England* glory in true Catholiciſm, which to all her other privileges, and

S Auguſt. de Unitate Eccleſiæ, c 2. T. 7. p. 510. *Quæſtio certè inter nos verſatur ubi ſit Eccleſia, utrum apud nos, an apud illos, quæ utique una eſt, quam majores noſtri Catholicam nominarunt, ut ex eo ipſo nomine oſtenderent, quia per totum eſt.* *Ibid.* c. 3 p. 514. *Chriſti Eccleſia Canonicarum Scripturarum Divinis & certiſſimis teſtimoniis in omnibus Gentibus deſignata eſt.* Et c. 4. *ab ejus corpore quod eſt Eccleſia ita diſſentiunt, ut eorum communio non ſit cum toto, quocunque diffundatur, ſed in aliquâ parte ſeparata inveniatur, manifeſtum eſt eos non eſſe in Eccleſiâ Catholicâ.* Et c. 12. p. 533. *aliud Evangelizat qui periiſſe dicit de cetero mundo Eccleſiam, & in parte Donati, in ſolâ Africâ remanſiſſe.* *Idem de fide & ſymbolo, in eam partem de Eccleſia Catholicâ*, T. 3. p. 149. *Hæretici de Deo falſa ſentiendo ipſam ſi cum violant, Schiſmatici autem diſciſſionibus iniquis à fraternâ Caritate diſſiliunt, quapropter nec Hæreticus pertinet ad Eccleſiam Catholicam, quæ diligit Deum, nec Schiſmaticus quoniam diligit proximum.*

and advantages that she may boast of above almost any other Church, still maintains, and evidences the greatest charity to others of any that I know in the world; makes no other inclosures than those which God himself hath made, not assuming any Authority to command, yea, or to pass hasty judgment upon any, but only to provide for her own the best she can, and with such tender regard to common Christianity, and the Rights of all other Churches, that she seems designedly to have chalkt out the way of restoring the most desirable fruits of Christian Unity throughout the whole Church; and we should have been sensible of considerable effects by it, had other Churches pursued like methods.

That Church sure is most *Catholick* that makes provision for the most Catholick Communion, Peace, and Unity, and which imposes no other terms or conditions of it but those most universally received throughout all Ages, in all places, and by almost all Christians; which may soon decide the competition, whether the Church of *England* more truly vindicates to her self a part of the Catholick Church, or they of *Rome* arrogate to themselves the whole? Or which are the Schismaticks from it, they which exclude none, whom they own no power over, but invite all to them, and joyn with any in what is good, and agreeable to the Institutions of our common Lord; or they who shut out all but those who will subject themselves to their usurpt Authority, and most unjustifiable Impositions. (*a*)

Farther the term *Catholick* is sometimes taken for *Orthodox*, and so the Catholick Church interpreted for that which holds the Catho-

a *Firmilianus de Stephano Episcopo Rom. ad Cyprianum*, Ep. 75. p. 228. Ox. Ed. *Siquidem ille verè Schismaticus, qui se à Communione Ecclesiasticæ unitatis Apostatam fecerit; dum enim putas omnes à te abstineri posse, solùm te ab omnibus abstinuisti.*

lick Faith opposed to heretical Opinions and Doctrines as well as to Schismatical Separations. (*b*) In this sense the Church of *England* hath as good a claim in the Catholick Church as any whatever; Receiving all the Articles of Christian Faith delivered in Scripture, and received in the Primitive Ages for more than five hundred years. No Principles having been so formally declared then, and for some time after, as the Catholick Faith of all Christians, and as such necessary to be own'd, which she rejects: whatever private opinions there might be then among some eminent Doctors of the Church in which they oft differed one from the other, or although there might be some observances then generally received which she thinks her self not bound to retain.

S. *Cyril. Hieros.* Cat 18 p. 20. Καθολικὴ μὲν ὀνομάζεται διὰ τὸ κατὰ πάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπὸ περάτων γῆς, ἕως περάτων, καὶ διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν καθολικῶς καὶ ἀνελλειπῶς ἅπαντα τὰ εἰς γνῶσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐλθεῖν ὀφείλοντα δόγματα. *Sozomen.* Hist. l. 7. c. 4.

But ill will this Character agree to the Romanists, who have added so many new dangerous Articles to the common Faith of Christians, not only beside the original Rule, which they cannot but own with us, but too often against it, and the professed belief of the first, and best Ages of the Church. Wherefore we reject not these innovations meerly from negative arguments, because not sufficiently proved; (and yet that way of arguing hath been always allowed in the Fundamentals of Faith, which must be grounded upon express Divine Authority and Testimony.) But we lay the greatest stress of our aversations to them upon that direct opposition, which we undertake to prove most of them have to the common Faith, and revealed Will of God which they and we both own. And surely that Church in this acceptation is most *Catholick*, that relies on such Catholick Principles, and refers all others to be examined by this touchstone.

V. But

V. But in the fifth place ſome Objections lie in our way fit to be anſwered.

Object. 1. They urge againſt us that we reject ſeveral Doctrines ſince formally determined in the Church by the known and received Authority thereof in Councils more general, or particular, which they pretend were believed through all Ages, but then eſtabliſhed when they came firſt to be called in queſtion.

Anſw. We are not much concerned in the firſt part of the objection, though very many exceptions might come in eſpecially as to the formality, and regularity of thoſe Councils: but as to the latter part in which the main ſtreſs lies here, we never refuſed a fair trial thereof.

1. From Scripture againſt which no Authority Civil, or Eccleſiaſtical, in ſingle perſons, or the greateſt Aſſemblies, no time, or cuſtome of whatever date can preſcribe. (*a*) This hath been ever received till of late as the perfect, and intire Rule of all neceſſary doctrines of Faith, and practice; of which abundant Teſtimonies may be ſeen in moſt Proteſtant Writers.

a Tertullian *de velandis virginibus*, c. 1. p. 172. *hoc exigete veritatem cui nemo præſcribere poteſt, non ſpatium temporum, non patrocinia perſonarum, non privilegium regionum.*

S. Cyprian, Ep. 63. p. 155. *Quare ſi ſolus Chriſtus audiendus eſt, non debemus attendere, quid alius ante nos faciendum putaverit, ſed quid qui ante omnes eſt Chriſtus prior fecit, neque enim hominis conſuetudinem ſequi oportet, ſed Dei veritatem.*

S. Baſil, *de judicio Dei*, T. 2. p. 392. *& ejus moral.* T. 2. p. 423.
S. Hieron. adv. *Joh. Hieroſ.* T. 2. p. 185. *& in eodem* T. *ex Ep. Aug. ad Hieron.* p. 353, 359. &c.

2. We appeal alſo to the Primitive, and beſt Ages of Chriſtianity which either knew nothing of theſe Additions that we can find, or ſometimes give as expreſs declarations againſt them, as could be expected at this diſtance. But to take off much of the ſtrangeneſs of ſo harſh an imputation at firſt ſight, wherewith we charge a great part of the Church for a conſiderable time, and that

that they and we may be leſs ſcandaliz'd at the firſt mention of theſe defections,

3. We may conſider the various Cautions in the New Teſtament againſt corrupt Doctrines, and Manners, which at the leaſt in general are foretold would creep into the Church, if ſome of them we now charge be not particularly deſcribed therein.

4. We may compare matter of fact with the experience of the like degeneracy of the Jewiſh Church in various inſtances ſo nearly reſembling theſe as nothing more, and from the ſame plea of Oral Tradition, yet againſt as clear evidence, and as emphatical promiſes to preſerve them from Apoſtacy as any particular Church at leaſt can now pretend to.

5. We may conſult the tendency of lapſt mankind, In the beſt how weak it is, and apt to be impoſed on; In others how prone to corrupt, and diſtort the beſt Inſtitutions, caſt a miſt before the cleareſt diſcoveries, and offer violence unto the ſtrongeſt convictions to ſhelter their vices, and promote their unwarrantable intereſts, eſpecially in times of eaſe, plenty, and outward proſperity. In which we may compare common experience in leſſer Societies, which however wiſely directed at firſt, regularly founded, and ſtrongly guarded on all ſides, without a very careful Inſpection, and ſometimes vigorus oppoſition, ſo many corruptions will creep in as to need frequent reformations to reduce them back to their primitive Conſtitution. And although an eſpecial providence be concerned for the guard and conduct of Gods Church, yet neither Scripture, or experience warrant us to expect its happy Influence by miracles now, for the effecting of that which may be accompliſhed by the uſe of ordinary and regular means of his own appointment.

6. We

6. We may reflect upon the particular Ages of the Church, which we charge especially with these defections from about the eighth Century to the Reformation, wherein if all or most of them did not come in, yet they grew to that extravagant heighth, as to gain establishment for Principles of Christianity. These Ages are charged by their own Authors, as well as ours, and stand most sensibly convict of the grossest Barbarism, Stupidity, Ignorance, depraved Manners, and all such corrupt Inclinations in all Orders and Degrees, especially the ruling part, as were most likely to make way for such Changes, and Innovations.

7. We have some farther sensible proof of a design in many within that time to impose upon the credulity of others, and bring in strange Doctrines, and unwarrantable Practices, by the many Fabulous Stories, feigned Apparitions, and Revelations, several of which they themselves will hardly now defend, then brought into the Church to confirm these points in difference, and which almost only the people then received for their Instructions, to entice them first into an awful opinion of, and then a confident reliance upon these things.

Nay farther, among the many spurious Writings which then crept into the world under the most venerable names of the renowned Fathers of the Church, now mostly discarded by themselves, when their shameless Impudence hath been so fully exposed, yet few of them there are in which this contrivance is not legible throughout to advance these Opinions, and Practices. So that we are indebted to the Reformation, those great men which laboured in it, and some of the most moderate and learned of their own side, with the Art of Printing then but newly found out, that almost all ancient Authors, and Records have not lost their

Authority, which would have been much endangered among ſuch groſs depravers of Antiquity, whoſe conſtant buſineſs it was to mar good Authors by their Interpolations, Additions, or Subſtractions: or vent new ones under counterfeit old names to ſerve their corrupt ends. But we are ſomewhat beholden to their ignorance, and ſtupidity, for doing it ſo groſly that there was need of little skill or obſervation to diſcover their Impoſtures.

8. To which may be added in the laſt place againſt the ſuppoſed preſumption in private perſons, or particular Churches to judge of publick Eſtabliſhments by a ſeeming Superiour Authority: that without ſome judgment of diſcretion in the former there is no room for a proper Moral Act, much leſs are they capable of a truly Religious Obligation, which an abſolute implicite faith perfectly deſtroys. But whilſt every man is bound to prove his own work, and muſt bear his own burden, he muſt examine the grounds of his aſſent according to his capacity, and determine himſelf by the beſt motives he can procure, and is concerned at his utmoſt peril to do it with all due reſpect to the Authority and Judgment of his Superiours, as well as the evidence of the things themſelves, which are no where in any Government beſide thought inconſiſtent.

Theſe Conſiderations duly weighed may obviate thoſe firſt prejudices which uſually lie in the way to intercept all thoughts of farther trial, and examination of particular Points in controverſie, and may ſilence or ſhame the late idle vaunts of ſuch who pretend to reaſon us out of our ſenſes, and undertake to demonſtrate it *à priori* impoſſible that ever any falſe opinion ſhould get into the Church, or prevail therein. I wiſh theſe men would try their pains, and ſubtilty to prove

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it impoſſible there could be any ſuch thing as wilful ſin in the world. I preſume they might have as good Topicks to pretend to it from all convictions of Reaſon or Intereſt. But after the moſt artificial compoſures herein they would hardly believe themſelves, or be credited by others againſt their experience. It were well if they might prevail to make that leſs frequent which all muſt own ſo unreaſonable in it ſelf, and deſtructive to us.

Object. 2. But our Adverſaries will yet urge upon us, that ſuppoſing, not granting ſuch a degeneracy in the Church, and need of Reformation: yet this ſhould have been done in order to preſerve *Catholick Unity* by common conſent in a general Council, and with moſt mature deliberation, and conſultation.

Anſw. 1. This was moſt earneſtly deſired, and inſiſted on by the firſt Reformers, witneſs the great Importunities of *Charles the Fifth* with the Pope upon their inſtance.

2. When this ſeemingly prevailed, and a pretended Council was called, it was far from being free or general. The Italian, and meer titular Biſhops outnumbred all the reſt, and both one and the other were overawed by the Popes immediate Dependants or Delegates, and all things carried by ſuch ſtratagems of Policy, or partiality of Intereſt that the only care taken was to fix the diſeaſe, and not provide for the cure by the beſt account we have of thoſe tranſactions. So that ſome Princes of their own Communion entred their Proteſtations againſt its proceedings, diſowning any Obligation to be tied up to their determinations.

3. As the divided ſtate of Chriſtendom now ſtands, it is rather to be wiſh'd for, than ſuppoſed almoſt poſſible.

From the different Intereſts and inclinations of Princes, who will hardly agree together in the Summons, place, or time of meeting, or about the perſons who are to reſort to it from their ſeveral Dominions. While the Roman Empire was intire, the Emperours Edict alone was Summons ſufficient to almoſt the whole Chriſtian Church. But now who ſhall take upon him to call or invite ſo many from ſo diſtant places no way under his Authority? And that the Pope ever pretended to this power till of late can ſcarce be pleaded againſt ſuch clear Evidences, and Examples; and where he is ſo much concerned, it will be judged more unreaſonable for him to demand it. If this difficulty were overcome by any conſent, or condeſcenſion; yet ſo many jealouſies, and croſs intereſts are behind, that will be, and have been laid in the way of their firſt meeting together with a requiſite peaceable diſpoſition, as are not eaſily foreſeen, and leſs readily governed; not to interpoſe the difficulties of the journeys from ſuch diſtant places, and of the diſcontinuance ſo long from home of the chief Governours of the Church: many doubts and controverſies of the number, and quality of perſons having right to vote therein by themſelves, or Repreſentatives will not ſoon be adjuſted, and without theſe and ſuch like determined there is no preparation made for ſo venerable an Aſſembly.

Eccleſia non num rus Epiſcoporum. Tertullian. *de pudicitiâ*, c. 22.

After all, when never ſo duly met, we have neither Reaſon, Promiſe, or Example to ſuppoſe them now infallibly guided in their determinations, but that they or the greater part may be miſtaken themſelves, or miſlead others, through paſſion, and falſe intereſt, or be carried away in the noiſe or torrent of a multitude, or be impoſed on by the crafty. He that conſiders matter of fact, more than the fineſt Schemes, and moſt ſubtil Reaſonings

Reasonings of his own brain, how things are oft strangely and unaccountably carried in publick meetings of men of extraordinary Fame: yea, in some Councils themselves, and some of very sacred Repute in the Church, (a) will think this no hard supposal: though their orderly Sentence carries the most venerable Authority below Heaven. It seems to argue the heighth of Blasphemy to arreign God himself of indiscretion, if it be possible for any man, or number of men to err from their Duty: And very presumptuous it is to charge the Supreme Providence of defect in the provision for the continuance of his Church if they be capable to fall away: yea, let God be true but every man a liar when brought in competition. He will not be tyed up by our most plausible Methods in the way of securing his own Truth, which shall at last prevail though condemned: whose wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways oft past out finding out. He will bring to pass his own holy designs, though by means to us most unlikely, or it may be seemingly opposite.

(a) *Greg. Naz.* Epist. 55. p. 814. & Ep. 72. p. 829. & Ep. 135. p. 864. *ejusd.* Orat. 25. *init.* p. 451. *Theod.* Ep. 112. Vol. 3. p. 982, 983.

Whoever seriously reflects upon these things will have little reason to quarrel at the Reformation for want of this formal establishment in Council.

No Christian, or Church is chargeable with the lack of that which it is not in their power to procure. Men may please themselves with remote Speculations, and the fairest hopes, and wishes of such an Authoritative Decision of the disputes in controversie; but if it be not to be had, we must rest content with, and make the best use we can of that provision which God in mercy hath indulged us for our sufficient satisfaction, and safety.

Every particular National Church directly subject to no other may, and ought to reform it self from known Abuses: keeping within the Rule of Gods

Word,

Word, avoiding as much as possible giving just offence to any beside, and being ready to give an account of its proceedings therein to all, and to alter any thing that shall be found amiss, or add whatever may be proved wanting, to receive others into its Communion, and to communicate with them so far as may be consistent with common Christianity own'd by all, endeavouring to preserve Peace, and Unity with all that call upon the same Lord, praying to God to increase, and improve them more and more; such hath been the continued aim, and proceeding of the Church of *England*.

We believe no true Member of this would have refused the general Communion of the truly Catholick Church in St. *Augustine*'s Age, or for some time after, though possibly every opinion, or practice then current be not suited to their present judgment, or wish. Neither can we think after so strange alteration of Circumstances through so many degenerate Ages, that holy Father in his eminent zeal for the most (*a*) Catholick Communion therein would now have been much moved by our present Adversaries arrogant claims of it to themselves alone, though against the Rules and Principles of it with all others. No Foundation is laid for it here but by the absolute submission of all others to their usurp'd Authority, and rash, or impious determinations. Now who can hope for an universal Peace and Unity from such terms of accommodation, only fit for an insulting Conquerour to impose, like those which *Nahash* the *Ammonnite* propounded to the men of *Jabesh Gilead* to thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all *Israel*, 1 *Sam.* 11. 2.

(*a*) S. Aug. *adv. Cresc. Gramm.* l. 3. T. 7. p. 263. *Ego in Ecclesiâ sum cujus membra sunt illæ omnes Ecclesiæ, quas ex laboribus Apostolorum notas, atque firmatas simul in literis Canonicis novimus. Earum Communionem sive in Africâ sive ubicunque non deseram.*

Object. 3. Sometimes they object to us the perſonal miſcarriages of ſome ingaged in the Reformation.

Anſw. If any did what they ought not, or with unjuſtifiable deſigns what they ought, the Church is no way accountable; if what they did in the Reformation, as ſuch, were good, and they had ſufficient Authority for doing it, which we are ready to maintain, that is all ſhe is reſponſible for, were other imputations really true, which they oft are not: However it will be an endleſs diſpute, and if determined would add little to the cauſe. I may add, few great and publick Changes are brought about, where ſo many intereſts are concerned either way to promote, or hinder them in which all things are carried with that clearneſs and evenneſs that were to be deſired. Private Perſons are not chargeable with the ſuppoſed defects of publick Adminiſtrations, of which they have not the management if nothing be required of them againſt their expreſs Duty, and they be provided of all neceſſary means of their Salvation, though they may be inclined to wiſh ſome things had been ordered otherwiſe.

Object. 4. Our Enemies on both ſides are apt to object to us the want of due Diſcipline, if not abſolutely neceſſary to the being of the Church, yet ſo far uſeful to the well-being, and perfection of it, that it ought to have great weight in determining our choice to one Communion before another, and is one of the moſt ſenſible bands of Unity in the Church.

Anſw. 1. The reſtauration of the Primitive Vigour of this hath been always wiſh'd for by our Church, as in the Preface to the Commination, but the accompliſhment is very difficult.

From the degeneracy of the Age, which would hardly bear it. He that Governs in a leſs Sphere will find

find how oft he must bear with things, which he does not approve: and much easier it is to find fault with, than to amend what sometimes we know to be amiss.

From the multiplicity of Divisions, which weaken all endeavours towards it, and then froward men unworthily charge the Church with what they themselves make almost unavoidable; whereas, if executed, it would reach themselves as nearly as any who are now so clamorous against the most tender, and charitable endeavours towards it as cruel and inhumane.

2. The Pretences, to it in the Church of *Rome* according to general practice, so far as it can appear to us, and we can judge by nothing else, are more dangerous than any of these Omissions, when turn'd into a constant circle of sinning, private Confession, and Priestly Absolution upon the imposition of very insignificant Penance, and so over again. For hereby men have the Authority of their Church to confirm in them the dangerous presumption that they have thus readily cleared themselves before God, and so soon perfected their Repentance for such Sins, which we find them not so watchful against afterward, as that ought to suppose, or make them.

Whereas the Church of *England* commends private Confession for our clearer satisfaction, and direction in difficult cases as most needful: but cannot truly say that it is an indispensable condition of our pardon, which was never so believed, or practised in the Church for many Centuries. If people will not be perswaded to their Priviledge, unless they be forced to it by false denunciations, they must look to that; if they miscarry it lies at their own door, while they have no hopes here given them of pardon, but upon such an intire Repentance as destroys the habit of sin, and

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plants the contrary Grace; and what need they may have of the Assistance of a Spiritual Guide, and other helps in many Cases in order to this effect, they may best consider.

3. However the due administration of Discipline is to be placed among conveniencies, and advantages to be wish'd for, rather than necessaries we cannot be without; and it hath been, and will be in all Ages of the Church more or less perfect according to a great many contingencies not to be stated before-hand. The Church hath ever judg'd it the best measure of using it so as may most serve the ends of Religion, and the general benefit of the Community, and not that she is bound always up to the strict merit of the persons falling under it; and yet after all the strictest care, and impartiality there will be room for the final Separation, when our Lord shall send his Angels to gather out of his own Kingdom all offences, and them which do iniquity. If we will shun all communication with these, though only in what is good, we must flee out of any Church that ever yet was, or will be, so far as we know, in this World, and so from any hopes in that to come: yet scarce any considerable Schism hath appeared in the Church, which did not shelter it self under this pretence.

4. Farther it may be alledged that several restraints may be upon the Church from the Civil Power. When this had suffered so much by former Encroachments, and Usurpations no wonder if it still retain some jealousie of that Yoke which with so much difficulty it cast off, and provide as securely as it can for its future preservation, though by suspending some of that outward assistance very conduceable to the due effect of Church Censures, and sometimes by putting a stop to their sensible progress, in some cases where no such

danger or neceſſity required it. Men by miſtakes, or prejudice may ſtrein each power too far. Better experience of the Regular management of the Eccleſiaſtical, may in due time encourage the Secular farther to enlarge their Liberty, and encourage their orderly proceedings ſo as may be moſt ſubſervient to the ends of true Religion, and the advancement of the common ſecurity of Church and State. All the power which the Church pretends to as ſuch is ſpiritual, and that can make no alteration in the Civil Rights of men.

5. Yet after all, the Church amongſt us hath not only ſufficient Authority committed to her by Chriſt; but reſerved, and countenanced by the Laws of the Land to teſtifie her Abhorrence of all notorious Scandals, to the ſhame, and confuſion of groſs Offenders, and as a direful earneſt of a worſe doom that awaits them hereafter, not here prevented by a ſatisfactory Repentance. I need not refer to particular inſtances when we have frequent examples thereof. If this be not always exerciſed by thoſe with whom it is entruſted with all due vigour, and ſincerity, after juſt abatement for neceſſity, and a favourable allowance for ſuch perplext difficulties, of which ſcarce any private perſon can make a fair and competent judgment, the fault will lie only at their doors whoſe is the neglect, and private Chriſtians ſhall not fare the worſe in the performance of their duty, nor fail of the ſalutary effects of the ordinary means of Grace by Gods own appointment, becauſe every publick miniſtration is not performed with that Religious care which becomes ſuch concerns.

6. Little pretence can they have from this Objection that deſert the Eſtabliſht National Church, and that moſt advantagious outward Bond of Unity therein, in purſuit of private Aſſemblies, and ſelect Congregati-

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ons, where all Acts of Diſcipline muſt needs be ſuppoſed Arbitrary on one ſide, and precarious on the other. When he or they who inflict them own no power over them to aw, or direct their proceedings, or upon juſt occaſion to reverſe their Sentence; nor he who falls under them has any other engagement to ſubmiſſion than his own free Act, nor can ſuffer any farther prejudice without it, than to be forced it may be to change his Company, or place of meeting. What ever grave, and ſolemn appearance this may carry at the firſt ſetting up of ſuch a new Government, it will ſoon degenerate into Mockery, or Confuſion. Whatſoever deſtroys the Unity of the Church overturns the main ſtrength, and Foundation of all Diſciplines, the defects hereof we may hope to ſee repaired with the preſervation of that, but without that no proſpect appears of any overtures towards it.

7. To which may be added in the laſt place, whatever want of Diſcipline any may lay to the charge of the Church of *England*, none can complain of her breach of that Unity therein, which all Chriſtian Churches ought to maintain. She neither invades the Rights, nor pretends to reverſe the juſt and regular Cenſures, nor countenances the Schiſmaticks, nor diſallows the miniſtrations of any other Church ſo far as conſiſtent with the expreſs Inſtitutions of our bleſſed Saviour, and the univerſally received practice of his Church, though otherwiſe mix'd with ſeveral corruptions which ſhe wiſhes removed.

Object. 5. Laſtly, our Roman Adverſaries object to us the many obſtinate Schiſms, and groſs Hereſies, which have ſprung up ſince the Reformation, and as they pretend out of it, from the forſaking of that bond of Unity in the Catholick Church, only to be hoped for in their Communion, where alone they ſay theſe are prevented, or ſoon cured.

Answ. The first part of matter of fact is too notorious to be denied, and too scandalous to be defended: but against the latter part of the original of these Schisms, and Heresies many just exceptions may be interposed.

1. The Reformation gives no countenance to them, but severely condemns them, and provides sufficient means to prevent or remove them; if notwithstanding wicked men of corrupt Principles, and depraved manners flee hither for shelter to hide their enormities, and abuse or pervert the most wholsom Institutions, and advantagious opportunities for their spiritual proficiency to the most contrary purposes; The guilt and ill consequence will lie only at their own doors. Christians must not be debarred of the ordinary means of Grace, because some turn this Grace into wantonness. St. *Peter* tells us of some who wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction; but neither he nor any other then, or for many Ages after thought this motive sufficient to deprive the People of the use of them, made it rather an argument of consulting them with greater caution and diligence, lest being led away with the error of the wicked they fall from their own stedfastness.

2. There were many Schisms and Heresies sprung up in the first and best Ages of the Church, even in the times of the Apostles themselves, as appears by several intimations in their Writings, and in the immediatly succeeding, while many Apostolical men were living, and if we compare the account we have of them in the most ancient Authors, particularly in *Irenæus*, they were as wild, and extravagant as any of the later date: yet the Apologists for true Christianity thought themselves very injuriously charged with those blasphemous Principles, or flagitious Practices which they wholly renounced, or disowned.

owned. The evil one is always moſt buſie to ſow his Tares amongſt the beſt Wheat. But that which is moſt to our purpoſe here to obſerve, is that the ſame method which the Orthodox Chriſtians then made uſe of for the Confutation, and Conviction of Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, we ſtill appeal to, by bringing them to the touchſtone of Scripture, and next to that the moſt Orthodox, and Catholick Tradition. Whereas how ſhort and eaſie a deciſion to all debates might have been fetcht hence, had they had the ſame apprehenſion of the Authority and Efficacy thereof by referring all Controverſies depending to the determination of the Roman Church, the Mother, and Miſtris of all, and to that infallible conduct ſetled therein: but not one word of that, only when they make their appeals to her after the expreſs Word of God, it is in common with many other Churches, eſpecially thoſe of Apoſtolical foundation, as in *Tertullian*, *Irenæus*, St. *Auguſtin*, &c. where they have to deal with ſuch perſons. (*a*)

a *Tertullian. adv. Marcion.* l. 4. c. 5. p. 415.

Videamus quod lac è Paulo Corinthii hauſerint; ad quam regulam Galatæ ſint recorrecti; quid legant Philippenſes, Theſſalonicenſes, Epheſii, quid etiam Romani de proximo ſonent, quibus Evangelium & Petrus, & Paulus ſanguine quoque ſuo ſignatum reliquerunt; habemus & Johannis alumnas Eccleſias.

Idem de præſcript. adv. Her. c. 36. p. 215. *Percurre Eccleſias Apoſtolicas & proxima eſt tibi Achaia, habes Corinthum, ſi non longè es à Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Theſſalonicenſes; ſi potes in Aſiam tendere habes Epheſum; ſi autem Italiæ adjaces habes Romam.* Et ibid. c. 32. p. 213. *de alijs. Quæ denique inſtituuntur tamen in eâdem fide conſpirantes non minùs Apoſtolicæ deputantur pro conſanguinitate doctrinæ.*

S. Irenæus *adv. Her.* l. 3. c. 3. p. 232.

S. Auguſtin. *de unitate Eccleſiæ.* c. 10. T. 7. p. 531. *ad Corinthios, ad Epheſios, ad Theſſalonicenſes, ad Coloſſenſes. Vos ſolas Apoſtoli Epiſtolas in lectione, nos autem Epiſtolas in Lectione, ac fide, & ipſas Eccleſias in Communione retinemus.* Ibid. c. 16. p. 546. *utrum ipſi Eccleſiam teneant non niſi Divinarum Scripturarum Canonicis libris oſtendant: quia nec nos propterea dicimus nobis credere oportere quod in Eccleſiâ Chriſti ſumus, quia ipſam quam tenemus commendavit Milevitanus Optatus, vel Mediolanenſis Ambroſius, vel alii innumerabiles noſtræ Communionis Epiſcopi, aut quia noſtrorum Collegarum Conciliis ipſa prædicata eſt; aut quia per totum orbem in locis ſanctis tanta mirabilia vel exaudituum, vel ſanitatum fiunt, &c. quæcunque talia in Catholicâ fiunt, ideo ſunt approbanda quia in Catholicâ fiunt, non ideo ipſa manifeſtatur Catholica, quia hæc in eâ fiunt.*

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3. The pretence of the moſt abſolute Authority in the one part, and the extortion of the moſt implicite Belief, and blind Obedience in the other among them have not been able to ſecure themſelves from conſiderable diſſentions, and Diviſions in opinion, and practice. If theſe have not broke out ordinarily into the moſt open Schiſms, and Hereſies, the ſtop is more due to the craft and policy whereby they oft compromiſe the matter between both parties, or to that outward force and violence which reſtrains them, rather than to any opinion which they themſelves have of this ready means of ending all diſputes. We find in the fierceſt debates among them how little heed is given to this infallible cure farther than intereſt or neceſſity inclines them. There may be a way of preventing controverſies, which deſtroys all Religion, and makes way for Atheiſm; in ſuch a caſe I need not enquire where the advantage lies.

4. We may anſwer, moſt of thoſe miſchiefs had their riſe from the ruines of the Church of *England*, when that was violently aſſaulted and broken, its Authority deſpiſed, its Conſtitutions vilified, its Order defaced, its faithful Adherents perſecuted, then Faction, and Diſorder, ſtrange Doctrines, Phrenſical Opinions, and all manner of looſeneſs in Principles, and Practices came in like a torrent, and overſpread the Land, which before skulkt in corners, and were little taken notice of. The Reſtitution of the Church hath in great meaſure put a ſtop to their progreſs; I know not of any Sect, which hath ſtarted up ſince that time: But almoſt every year before brought forth ſeveral. If her pains and care have not yet been ſo ſucceſsfully prevalent as to recover, and reſtore all that have gone aſtray, ſhe hath not been wanting in her endeavours towards it, which have reduced many; and it is no little time, nor eaſie

eaſie task to repair the Ruines of ſuch long Confuſions, and Deſolations.

5. We owe a great part of theſe Calamities to the ſame perſons, who now charge them upon us; for beſide the influence which their Agents, Principles, and Examples had in contriving and promoting thoſe unnatural Commotions, and Rebellions in the State which I am not now concerned to examine; let matter of fact determine that as it hath been found more or leſs plain: Thus far we have abundant evidence that ſeveral of their Emiſſaries have herded with the chief of our Diſſenters, and if ſome of the groſſeſt Sects were not framed among them firſt, as ſeems very probable, yet moſt of them have been much fomented, and ſtrengthened by them, and they have been oft found acting their parts under that diſguiſe, and have employed on all occaſions their intereſt to ſhelter, and protect them, according to the known maxime of their Policy, that the readieſt way of effecting our ruine was by increaſing, and fomenting our Diviſions; here they have found their greateſt harveſt. For when mens minds are unſetled, and they grown giddy with being long turned about by every new wind of Doctrine, and are weary of tumbling and toſſing from one Party to another, they will eaſily catch hold of any fancied ſupport, and be ſooner betrayed to yield themſelves Captives to the deluſory hopes of reſt and ſettlement amongſt them.

6. To all which may be added, much of that irreverence, and contempt of Perſons, and things Sacred, which have made way for the forementioned ſad Calamities amongſt us are moſtly due to their Oppreſſions, Inſolencies, or Deluſions. When the People had ſo long groaned under their tyrannical yoke, and intolerable burdens, and found themſelves ſo oft cheated by

by their manifeſt impoſtures, no marvel if they be over-fearful of what they had ſuffered ſo much from, and afterwards too ſuſpicious of being deluded again, and be ſoon tempted to tranſgreſs due meaſure in the uſe of their liberty, being juſt recovered from extreme ſlavery, though ſo many years have paſſed ſince, as will hardly admit of a tolerable excuſe: Yet better experience, and longer conſideration we hope in time may teach them to diſtinguiſh between the certain Intereſts of true Religion, and the hypocritical wiles of worldly Craft and Policy, and ſo to think a due reſpect, and Obſequiouſneſs to thoſe who ſincerely manage the former, neceſſary to preſerve them from being impoſed on by the latter, and prevent their falling into the like miſcarriages which they obſerve in others; And that Apoſtolical Government, good Order, wholſom Diſcipline, ſound Doctrine, and Uniform Devotion may no longer ſuffer under the falſe, but moſt odious charge of Popery, and that they who have under God been moſt inſtrumental in reforming, and defending the Church from the real, and groſs Corruptions thereof, may not ſtill be oppreſſed with the unreaſonable clamour of a meer invidious name, which they that uſe moſt know very little what they mean by it, only that it denotes ſomewhat favoured by them of whom they have deſervedly an ill opinion. The caſe hath been too like exemplified in another Inſtance, eſpecially of late years, in which many Hypocrites have ſo ſcandalouſly abuſed the moſt ſolemn pretences to Sanctity and Devotion for a covering or continuance to the moſt horrid Oppreſſions, Schiſms, and Rebellions, that they have emboldened profane men to ſcorn, and ſend out open Defiances againſt the very appearance of Religion, and poſſibly tempted others ſerious, and hearty lovers of its cauſe to be too modeſt, and ſhamefaced in its defence:

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yet we hope unfeigned Piety will be always juſtified of its Children. Suitably truly Catholick Principles, and Obſervances may vindicate themſelves, though groſs Errors, and Impoſtures have long paſſed under that diſguiſe: Notwithſtanding ordinary People, not always the beſt diſtinguiſhers, and who are often hurried from one extreme to another, do not readily diſcern one from the other, but having found themſelves once cheated; be a long time over-jealous of a like deſign upon them.

VI. From the Premiſes duly conſidered will, I hope, in the cloſe be inferred the ſtrongeſt motive, and Obligation upon all among us heartily to embrace, and ſteadily to perſevere in the Communion of our Church: to ſhare in thoſe happy Advantages and Bleſſings, which all who rightly improve it may promiſe themſelves therein. She deſires by all means poſſible to convince their Conſciences, and incline their Affections to a willing compliance with their indiſpenſable Duty, and higheſt Priviledge, rather than over-aw their perſons by ſevere Cenſures, or the following condign puniſhments. Nay, if neceſſity force upon any the execution of the laſt, when they will not hearken to the former, ſhe pleads the ſame Charity for the Principle of both, not only to prevent others from being ſeduced by the ſame Errors: But alſo thus to deter them from more diſmal Ruine here, and hereafter, which hangs over them perſiſting ſtill in the ſame obſtinacy. (*a*) Of all ſhe hath the tendereſt compaſſion, though making a difference, but without partiality. Some muſt be ſaved with Fear, and almoſt violently pulled out of the Fire.

(*a*) S. Auguſtin *adv. Epiſt. Petiliani*, l. 2. T. 7. p. 101. *Non vos occidimus, ſed ipſi vosmet verâ morte occiditis, cùm vos ab unitatis vivâ radice præciditis.*

Men may make a noiſe with the odious name of Perſecution; yet our Adverſaries of both extremes have little reaſon to object that, of which they themſelves ſtand ſo deeply chargeable when in their power. But we relie not on that Plea, which however it offend them, would not clear us. No ſetled Government, Civil, or Sacred, was ever, or is more gentle, and compaſſionate in its inflictions than ours: If when this Tenderneſs was requited with new and greater Inſolence, and more obſtinate Contempt, Authority begin to put on a more harſh, and ſevere Countenance, and make uſe of the rod of its power to correct the peeviſhneſs of ſome, or reſtrain the extravagancies of others, it is to be hoped they will in the end find it for their edification, and not for their deſtruction, and may ſee cauſe to bleſs God, and thank their Governours for thoſe benign Penalties, which almoſt forceably opened their eyes to diſcern that evidence which pertinacious obſtinacy had ſhut them againſt in all other Perſuaſives, as (*b*) St. *Auguſtin* declares ſeveral of the Donatiſts had profeſſed to him, and therefore ſaw great reaſon to recal, and recant the many clamours they had raiſed on this occaſion. I hope we are not without many ſenſible Inſtances of the good effect hereof among our ſelves, though it be very different in ſome from what it is in others; but the tendency of it is certainly to what is good in all.

(*b*) S. Aug. *Epiſt. 48 ad Vincentium.* T. 2. p. 167. 174.

Experience, and farther conſideration may have made all prudent and ſober Friends to true Piety, Virtue, and good Order aſhamed of the popular Plea of Liberty, or that men ought to be left free from any reſtraint, or Impoſitions in matters of Religion, and Conſcience; which muſt needs confound all peace, and overturn all Government in every Society, and ſo deſtroy the being of the Church as ſuch, and expoſe private perſons to all manner of ſtrange deluſions, and extra-

extravagant enterprises without the least guard or defence; beside the ill aspect it hath on the Civil Peace; I may add, It never was, and I doubt never will be practised by any Party of men, when they can do otherwise, who flee to it only for Sanctuary when they can find shelter no where beside. Would men but impartially look abroad, or consult former times, or but really consider what were like to be their state under any other setled Constitution by whatever favourable Character it may have been represented, they might find little temptation to querulous uneasiness in their present condition, and small encouragement to seek, and improve every occasion to quarrel at those few, and mild restraints laid on them, especially if withal they would faithfully reflect upon the ill use which hath been made of more remissness.

Indeed Christianity, which is the Gospel of Love, and Peace, and is almost wholly made up of Charity, inclines us first, and most, to the mildest methods, as most grateful, most likely to win upon other mens good affections, and to testifie our own. But then this mildness may be turned into the greatest cruelty to the guilty as well as to the innocent, yea, to the whole Community. Our great wisdom will be so to pursue the former as we may avoid the latter, and I know not where it is done more cautiously than here.

If we were to examine the strange and stiff Aversations in many to the Communion of our Church, we shall find them mostly owing to blind Prejudice, and gross Ignorance of what is required of them, more than to any other Principles. They have been brought up in a very ill opinion of our Service meerly by odious names, sly and invidious Characters given to it from persons whose sincerity and judgment they relie on, and so are before resolved against any farther enquiry,

and industriously shun all opportunities of better information either by personal Conference, or reading our Books. They think themselves sufficiently satisfied, and go on to hate and revile, but they often know not what, nor why. If we could bring them to make their own trial, who are always jealous of any attempts from us, matter of fact would be their best confutation, and their own Eyes and Ears prove their most effectual conviction, so as to wonder at their former obstinacy, which some of them have confessed upon this experience. I believe were some fierce Dissenters ask'd, they can scarce say, that they ever seriously read, or attentively heard the Liturgy, and know very little what it is therein which offends them; I am sure they will hardly tell us. Sometimes meer novelty startles them, and they are afraid only for not being used to it.

These, and many such little Objections, that we can scarce guess at would soon be removed by this sensible proof reach'd down to all capacities; and a sober, steady temper of mind, with a firm, and well-grounded belief in most of the material Points of Christian Doctrine, variously inculcated in the several Offices of our Liturgy, would grow up more and more in them; for want of this we find in several Zealots very little knowledge of the first Principles of Christian Religion, and indeed very little to be learnt from those manner of discourses and Phrases to which they have been hitherto used. But more particularly may these Reflections be applied to invite the Romanists amongst us unto the free, sincere, and cordial Communion with the Church of *England*, which once, though only to outward appearance, they generally observed, and have almost nothing to object against it but the rash, and Schismatical Interdict of a forein usurped Power. That

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the terms of our Communion are moſt truly Catholick hath been the chief deſign of this ſmall Tract to prove, and thereby to prevent the common prejudice from the name of the Catholick, and Apoſtolick Church, in which, whatever they aſſume to themſelves, we have as good a title to our ſhare as any Church in the world. And no ſenſible evidence have we of our Communion with that Catholick Church, but by communicating with the more particular Church in which Divine Providence hath placed us, where nothing is required of us repugnant to the Bond of Unity in the whole.

Many of our Church, yea, our Conſtitution it ſelf have been often charged, and reviled, though moſt unjuſtly, with too favourable an inclination to them of *Rome:* becauſe whatever of good Order, and decent Solemnity, as well as ſound Doctrine, and wholſom Inſtruction was found among them, is ſtill retained and cheriſhed by us. And that we are not ſo haſty and peremptory in unchurching them all together, or damning preſently all that have been, or are ſtill of their Communion, as ſome would have us: which is in effect for being more tender in preſerving the Principles of true Catholick Unity than in pleaſing ſome private humours or prejudices.

Still we muſt be aware that no pretended Charity to them, nor yet compliance with thoſe who pretend the greateſt oppoſition to them muſt tempt us to betray the Truth of God, or violate our Obligation to his Commands on either ſide; and within thoſe bounds to conſult, as much as poſſible, the Peace and Unity of his Church, and continue therein. If the former retort our kindneſs upon us in new Oppoſitions: If the latter load our religious care and modeſt caution with all thoſe dreadful imputations due to others: If we

ſuffer

ſuffer from both ſides, whilſt it is only for ſpeaking the Truth, and doing our Duty, which we have no power to alter; we may juſtifie our ſelves before God, and our own Conſciences, and in due time with all good reaſonable, and conſiderative men, and then it is no matter what the clamours, and captious cavils of others lay upon us.

But yet our Adverſaries of the Roman Perſuaſion muſt take notice, that while we are ſo wary, and ſparing in our Cenſures of them, we are not the leſs apprehenſive of the extreme danger which attends thoſe groſs Errors and Superſtitions, wherewith we charge them, which have a direct tendency to their ruine, and very much undermine the foundations of Faith, and good Life, which they own in common with us. What may be their influence upon any particular perſons is more than we dare determine, and think always more ſafe to incline to the favourable ſide, where it may be without prejudice to what is certainly true and good. Notwithſtanding whatever our opinion be, that will not alter the caſe at laſt, and thus far we are moſt determinate that the corruptions among them are ſuch which every Church is bound to reform, and every true Chriſtian to keep at a diſtance from, as much as is in his power.

Whatſoever were the condition of thoſe who lived in that Communion before the Reformation, many of them groaned under thoſe Oppreſſions from which we are happily freed: nay, whatever charitable allowance may ſtill be made for them, who now live within thoſe Boundaries where they have little opportunity of knowing better, and are under vaſt prejudices by contrary Education, and the ſevereſt aw over them: How far, I ſay, theſe caſes may be pleadable, muſt be left to God and their own Conſciences.

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As for thoſe born, and bred among us, who have been treacherouſly deluded into Apoſtacy from us, or will perſiſt in their hereditary obſtinate averſeneſs to us againſt the cleareſt conviction, which they may receive, and in oppoſition to the expreſs Laws of God, and of the Land, to the perpetual diſturbance of the State, and confuſion of the Church; there appears no room for any excuſe to leſſen their Crime, or alleviate their doom, which will be mightily increaſed, when all manner of hidden and crafty Artifices, or open violences againſt the common Rights of Humane Society, and moral Honeſty, as well as the Faith, and Charity of Chriſts Church are employed, and conſecrated into a religious but blind Zeal for the deſtruction of both.

No marvel if the Nation awakened with the effects hereof, which it hath ſometimes felt, and oftener had reaſon to fear, have provided ſome ſevere Laws for an aw over them, and to ſtop the firſt beginnings of ſuch exorbitant attempts, ready to break through all ordinary incloſures, and which will hardly be reſtrained by the uſual methods of Government. No temper is more difficultly maſtered, or more miſchievous, if let looſe, than ſuch a falſe fiery zeal, which neglected burns all before it.

But whatever may have been their Treatment of us formerly, or we may juſtly apprehend would be ſtill, had they any opportunity, which God prevent: we ought not, and hope ſhall not ever deſiſt from wiſhing, and endeavouring, as much as is in our power, their real welfare, and ſo of all our implacable Enemies, and therein their hearty Union with us in the holy Offices of Religion. and Fellowſhip of Gods Church where they live, with the ſincere renunciation of thoſe dangerous Errors, and Practices that hitherto keep them at a diſtance from us.

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In Concluſion, inſtead of querulous expoſtulations, or catching occaſions to find fault, we have great reaſon to admire and adore that gracious Providence, which amidſt ſo many Confuſions, Diſorders, and Corruptions that prevail too much in moſt places round about, hath placed our Lot in ſo happy a ſoil, and provided for us ſo goodly a Heritage, and ſafe Retreat in the Boſom of that Church, whoſe Charity is as eminent as its Faith, and its Order as ſignal as its Purity; whoſe Arms are always open to receive its returning Enemies with the moſt tender Compaſſions, as well as to cheriſh its faithful Friends with the moſt wholſom and indulgent proviſions; where nothing is wanting to enſure our ſafety, and encourage our proficiency in every thing that is good and excellent: which upon former trial of both the oppoſite extremes, the whole Kingdom hath ſeen neceſſary to flee back into, to repair the Confuſions and Devaſtations they had brought: and in its moſt dangerous Convulſions here hath found the readieſt Cure, and under whoſe name her very Enemies deſire to ſhelter themſelves: which finally ingages us to expreſs our gratitude for ſo peculiar Priviledges by a ready and impartial Obedience to the holy Doctrine we are taught, and a fruitful improvement of all thoſe happy Advantages which we enjoy therein. That our Lives may be anſwerable to our Profeſſion, and our pious, virtuous, peaceable, and charitable Converſation may be in ſome proportion as defenſible, and remarkable as the Principles we proceed upon, or the benefits we lay claim to.

This would moſt effectually ſilence the captious Cavils of our Enemies on every ſide, and more powerfully invite them to our Communion than all other the moſt demonſtrative Arguments: when their very ſenſes would bear witneſs that God is in us of a truth.

I hope we are not deſtitute of ſome ſuch eminent Examples of unfeigned Piety, true Holineſs, and univerſal Probity. God Almighty increaſe their number more, and more: Yet whatſoever may be the effect thereof upon other men, this method would moſt unqueſtionably enſure our own firmeſt Peace here, and everlaſting Salvation hereafter. Here we keep certainly within our own bounds, and may moſt ſafely, and profitably ſpend all our Zeal, while other men pleaſe themſelves in diverting it abroad to what they have no power over. It ſeems horribly nauſeous to hear men quarrel fiercely about the beſt Church, who live in the moſt open defiance to all Religion, and I doubt there are too many of all denominations chargeable herewith. Yet whatever the caſe of others prove, it will be moſt ſafe, and pious to bring it home, and cloſe to our ſelves. Be our Church, or our Profeſſion never ſo much better than any other, if we be not alſo ſuitably better than other men, they will riſe up in judgment againſt us at the laſt.

But by a careful and diligent obſervance of its ſacred Preſcriptions we ſhall juſtifie our Reformation throughout, put a ſtop to the Reproaches, and ſhame the Calumnies of our Adverſaries, and which is the Summary of all good intentions, and endeavours, bring honour to our great Lord and Maſter, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith.

FINIS.